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ABSTRACT

Digital technologies have brought about sweeping changes in the life of the university--changes that will have momentous effects in the decades to come. This first book-length analysis of the meaning of the Internet for the future of higher education cuts through claims that these developments will bring benefits for all. This analysis shows how university teachers are losing control over what they teach, how they teach, and for what purpose. It shows how erosion of their intellectual property rights makes academic employment ever less secure. The academic workforce will be reconfigured as administrators claim ownership of the course-designs and teaching materials developed by faculty, and try to lower labor costs in the marketing and delivery of courses. Rather than providing new opportunities for students, the online university represents new opportunities for investors to profit while shifting the burden of paying for education from the public purse to the individual consumer. This book locates recent developments within a longer-term historical perspective, drawing out parallels between Internet education and the correspondence course movement of the early decades of the twentieth century. It traces the process through the current moves to make the U.S. Department of Defense a major consumer of Internet education, capable of reshaping major components of university life to meet its needs. An Afterword discusses likely developments in the aftermath of the September 11 attack on the World Trade Center. One article, "Business Goes Back to College," is appended. (Includes an index.) (AEF)

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